

POLYGRAPH OPERATIONS

I. Subject

A proposed plan to institute in the Training Division of CIA, under the Assessment Staff, a program to train polygraph operators to serve the needs of OSO, OFC, and I&SS.

II. Preliminary Investigation

In order to ascertain the best procedures of integrating a polygraph training program to the existing problems of CIA, many people in the Agency were consulted. Among those contacted were: Mr. [REDACTED] Lt. Col. [REDACTED]

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There was enthusiastic agreement that an intra-agency polygraph training program would be a tremendous advance over the present procedure of training polygraph operators. Though the needs of the various sections differ, the problem of secure and expert training is general and can be met with a single course of instruction. The lines of responsibility regarding polygraph operations are clearly set forth in existing policy. That is that only I&SS is authorized to conduct polygraph operations within the continental limits of the United States. Further, that OSO and OFC will be responsible for polygraph operations conducted overseas, excepting that no staff personnel will be subjected to such operations.

III. General Considerations

There is no machine which detects lies. The polygraph technique, regardless of the brand name of the machine, is a procedure using entirely objective methods based upon analysis of physiological changes during a cross-examination under controlled conditions. It is essential to realize that this testing does not detect lies, but painful complexes which are intensified by focusing the subject's attention on questions of truth or falsehood. This is the advance over the usual methods of investigation. It is necessary to evaluate the emotional changes of a subject whose reputation, liberty, and even life may be involved. These emotional changes are recorded in terms of physiological criteria. To use the polygraph competently, intelligence, scientific training and practical experience are required.

Practically all of the original scientific research on this problem was contributed by psychological and physiological investigators. Many polygraph operators are unfamiliar with the basic principles involved and are largely concerned with exploiting a "machine". In intelligence work there is the added factor of security to be considered. Therefore it is proposed to institute a program of training polygraph operators within the Agency to be conducted by specially trained psychologists on the Assessment Staff.

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A staff training cadre will be organized to present the main course of instruction. While not actually engaged in preparing and conducting the course, these psychologists will assume regular duties in the general assessment program. The training cadre will be the nucleus of the teaching staff but will require the assistance of others. Outside experts will be called in as consultants first to aid in developing a complete and comprehensive course, and secondly, to be available for special problems as they arise. Specialists within the Agency will be called in to give lectures on various subjects and problems, some of which are peculiar to intelligence operations. These will include medical, security, and operational experts.

We will not attempt to establish definite qualifications for polygraph trainees at this time. It may be well to point out, however, that to understand the subject and the record and to interpret the record, the examiner must be familiar with psychology, physiology, and scientific methods. To achieve scientifically controlled conditions, training in experimental psychology or in any experimental science is most desirable. Polygraph examiners should be familiar with methods of interrogation gained either from clinical, legal, or police experience. A high degree of intelligence is necessary; a college degree is desirable. Foreign language ability is most helpful in dealing with foreign nationals. If we wish to make the greatest possible use of science in investigation and operational intelligence, let the personnel be suitably equipped.

In addition to the actual training in the use of the polygraph, we assume that the candidates for training will have had operational experience or if they do not have this experience, they will be given the opportunity to take operational training before studying polygraph methods. Also, training in the assessment functions might prove useful. Finally, it is almost a necessity that the trainee receive on-the-job training using the polygraph. It is strongly recommended that after the candidates complete the course in polygraph techniques, that they work with expert examiners in I&SS for a period of several months before being actually assigned to their respective positions. The course content and procedures will be integrated to fit the needs of I&SS, OSO, and OFC. The authorization and coordination of the program will be worked out jointly by the Joint Training Committee and I&SS.

IV. Tentative Training Requirements

The proposed plan is predicated upon the existing situation and does not consider requirements which might be demanded by a mobilization expansion of the Agency. Obviously, it is not possible either to predict needs required short of mobilization. The proposed plan assumes that there will be a small intermittent demand for the training of polygraph operators in the immediate future. We propose to present what might be called an optimum plan to handle these needs and also the minimum requirements.